# Saco Watershed Collaborative: Fall Meeting

## Saco River Corridor Commission | 81 Maple St. Cornish

### September 27, 2018 | 9:30am to 12:30 pm

#### Attendees

Listed on the last page

#### How is your Organization meeting the Four Action Strategies of the Saco Watershed Collaborative Action Plan?

1) Engage and inspire governments, organizations and citizens to take action to sustain water in the Saco Watershed.

2) Protect water quality through pollution prevention and restoration of degraded waters in the Saco Watershed.

3) Support land conservation and stewardship to protect water quality in the Saco Watershed.

4) Promote and enforce low impact development strategies, stormwater and wastewater best management practices, and land use development that protect water.

#### Saco River Corridor Commission Overview

Dalyn Houser provided:

* An overview of the enabling legislation and discovery period for the SRCC
	+ 1971 – Legislature passed an Act to create the Saco River Environmental Advisory Committee to develop a plan for future management of the Saco River
	+ 1973 – 2 years of discovery included a survey of riverfront landowners
		- 88% agreed that controls are needed to encourage selective development
		- 34% believed the control should be a regional body (not Federal, State or local)
	+ Performance standards remain largely the same
		- Jurisdiction within 500 feet or River’s mean water line
		- River frontage (in feet) + Set back (in feet) = 500 feet (in aggregate)
	+ Largest challenge = raising awareness regarding the additional level of regulation and standards that apply within Corridor
* An update on The Waters Project on Saco Island
	+ Application has been tabled for applicant to revise requirements to meet SRCC standards (e.g., buffers, visual impacts, etc.)
	+ Anticipated to be presented at 10/24 meeting of SRCC
* **ACTION:** Dalyn to keep the Collaborative posted on continued projects and efforts

#### Field Trip: River Bend Farm Presentation

Drew Dumsch, founder of The Ecology School, provided a presentation on River Bend Farm, which was the Collaborative’s last field trip

* Focus = agroecology, community & resiliency
* Conservation 3.0 = active management that includes resiliency and active stewardship
	+ Conservation 2.0 = Agricultural Land Trust – nature as an essential benefit to people
	+ Conservation 1.0 = Preservation of Property (fairly passive)
* In general, project meets all 4 goals of Saco Watershed Collaborative action strategies
1. Engages government
	* Federal: USDA-RD financing
	* State: DEP septic innovations
	* Local: Planning Board review
2. Protects/restores water quality since project purpose is to increase net conservation through:
	* Improvement of soil and water quality
	* Enhancement of natural characteristics and resiliency
3. Support land conservation and stewardship through:
	* Easements
	* Education programs on site
	* Maintaining agrarian and natural systems together
4. Promotes/enforces LID and BMPs by:
	* Supporting research plots (i.e., resiliency study, reintroduction of American chestnut tree)
	* Seeking innovative techniques (bioseptic technology, lasagna beds, metanoia perspective)
	* Receiving LIVING BUILDING certification, which is beyond LEED certification
* Proposed Buildings include:
	+ Dining commons
	+ 2 dorms (one dorm is a series of 3 units)
	+ Full-scale Saco watershed model on patio
	+ Innovation for process water (channel water thru swales for irrigation and minimize erosion)
	+ Incorporation of local composite laminate timber (CLT) in structures
	+ Year-round operation
		- Incorporate agro- and/or eco-tourism
		- Add food systems major at UNE and use farm as part of curriculum
		- Partner with Environmental Living & Learning for Maine Students (ELLMS) project to quality for larger State and Federal funding
	+ $2.5M capital campaign (raised $1M since April)
* **ACTION:** Emily to include Drew’s slides and handouts with meeting minutes

#### Field Trip: Saco River Paddle

Emily provided an update on how Deanna Morris (Saco River Recreational Council) and Allison Foran (Lovewell Pond Association) provided planning and guidance during paddle on 9/14/18

* Saco River Recreational Council background
	+ Formed in 1970s
	+ Three goals
1. Clean up (River Runners from Brownfield to Fryeburg regularly collect trash)
2. Safety (Police boats patrol the area)
3. Education & outreach (focus = responsible recreational principles)
* Courtesy Boat Inspections (CBI) was discussed by Allison Foran at Lovewell Landing (state-owned)
	+ Looking for invasive species
		- Plants (visual observation; cannot mandate removal of milfoil, hydrilla, etc.)
		- Microbial (education/outreach since not visible; can live for 5 days on paddles, shoes, etc.)
		- Insects
	+ Inspecting both motorized and non-motorized boats
		- Up to 90 private boats/day, plus liveries
		- Jet skis most problematic since water remains inside machine
			* Asking owners to purge system after use on the River
			* Recommendations:
				+ Need a BMP for boat maintenance and for marinas
				+ Need milfoil stickers for non-motorized boats
				+ Make CBIs “mandatory boat inspectors”
	+ **ACTION:** Robyn to connect Allison with Peter Lowell/LEA’s Planning Retreat to add these recommendations to the proposed statewide policy changes

#### Field Trip: White Mountain National Forest

Jim Innes outlined the upcoming trip on 10/12/18; registration is open

* Challenges to maintain forest, primarily from increased precipitation
	+ River bed changing
	+ Restoring floodplains vs. saving roads
* Tour will showcase storm damage and historic sites
* Registration link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/white-mountains-national-forest-tour-tickets-49988989413>

#### Partner Updates: How is each organization meeting 4 action strategies?

**Tyler Davidson/NHDES** on phone call

1. NHDES is working toward meeting all 4 action strategies, but specifics were provided on Strategies 2-4 (see four strategies listed on Page 1) – and willing to fill in the gaps if more info is needed
2. NHDES achieves action strategy 2 by protecting water quality systems through:
	* Best practice inspections
	* Training for operators to comply with NHDES 401 rules re:
		+ Handling regulated substances to avoid contamination
		+ Managing wellhead protection areas
		+ Maintaining a current list of all water systems, operators, etc.
3. NHDES achieves action strategy 3 through sources water protections, trust funds for land conservation to protect drinking water sources, GIS database that has important information layers (e.g., priority areas, high-yield areas, wellheads, etc.)
4. NHDES achieves action strategy 4 through NH’s “Soak up the Rain” program, which promotes LID, stormwater BMPs, etc. on private land

**Kira Jacobs/EPA** Drinking Water Program on phone

Will update us at annual meeting on summer accomplishments, meeting multiple objectives, and grants including National WQ Initiatives and Harvard Forest meeting with Highstead Foundation, which Karl will talk more about

**Karl Honkonen/USFS**

Update on several grant/funding opportunities and how USFS is meeting four action strategies:

1. LSR = Landscape-Scale Restoration grant to (1) raise awareness of forestry resources for sustainable forestry practices throughout New England; and (2) develop brand and tools with a consultant
	* Applied for this 3-yr grant
	* Awarded in Spring
2. Joint Chiefs Grant between USFS & USDA-NRCS due in October
	* Group decided too short notice for this year, but perhaps next year
	* Some discussion around whether or not this opportunity will be available next year since the Chiefs may be replaced under new administration
3. USFS helps to meet
	* Action Strategy #3 through cooperative agreements that fund development of forestry management plans done by State and/or Cooperative Extension to raise awareness of sustainable practices to better manage forest resources
	* Action Strategy #4 by promoting LID strategies, such as riparian buffer restoration in suburban parts of the Merrimac River
4. REMINDER: every State has a 5-yr Forestry Action Plan – if any proposed activity is in alignment with this Plan then it is eligible for grant funding

**Kelly Boland/NRCS-NH** State Biologist

NRCS-NH helping with:

* Action Strategy #3
* WORKSHOP REMINDER: Offered in Albany, NH week of 10/2/18; Topic = Stream habitat restoration workshop using woody debris
* NEW AGREEMENT WITH COOPERATIVE EXTENSION to assist with site walks and more
* Action Strategy #4
* Conservation and stewardship by requiring forest management plans before implementing riparian buffers; and identifying resource concerns for timber stands with eligible cooperators
* “Working Lands for Wildlife” initiative for turtles (habitat restoration is a resource concern)

**Mark Dubois/Poland Spring**

Poland Springs is actively conserving thousands of acres in Maine (Action Strategy #3) and throughout Saco Watershed, including: Starks Hill (ski area), Denmark (cold springs site purchased), and more (Kingfield with education center). Poland Springs also works with selectman and planning boards (Action Strategy #1) to help provide case for wellhead protection ordinance requirements. A restoration project (Action Strategy #2) was completed in Hollis where 500,00 trees were planted (adjacent to TNC’s Pitch Pines forest) on a potato farm where contaminated soils were remediated. In all of these examples, Poland Springs works to keep land open for recreational use, and pulls money from all over the Country to preserve/conserve land in Maine. Poland Springs has also secured $40K in funding for the Collaborative for 2019.

**Jim Innes/USFS** on White Mtn National Forest management

White Mtn National Forest is largely the headwaters of the Saco River Watershed, where 35% of land is in forest management plan.

* USFS manages the land base to ensure it can be used for recreation (hiking trails), forestry (13M boardfeet harvested annually), and to maintain water quality and wildlife habitat. Specifically, Jim manages 200K acres of land with a staff of 20 people. He is one of three rangers in the Forest where the amount of people recreating is overwhelming, specifically at Diana’s bath (traffic problem), Echo Lake and First Bridge.
* Saco Watershed Collaborative may have a role in upcoming “Stewardship Contract”, where contractors are able to bid on the harvest in exchange for work on the land to manage with their technical skills, like a barter system. This is a good benefit for the community.
* Top challenges this year:
	1. WQ – number of people jumping in the water with sunscreen
	2. Habitat – number/frequency of intense storms

**Missy Brandt/York County SWCD**

YCSWCD has an engineer and project manager, where they are working in watersheds like Thatcher Brook (Biddeford), Goosefare Brook (Saco), and soon in Kennebunk and Mousam River watersheds. YCSWCD maintains a 140-acre demonstration forest with BMPs and site for workshops and wildlife opening.

**Saco River Corridor Commission**

* **Commissioner Dave Robinson** reminded us that SRCC is a volunteer Board. Dave is also a volunteer with the Saco Salmon Commission. There are 26 sitting Commissioners (2 members from each town: primary and alternate).
* **Executive Director Dalyn Houser** reminded us how SRCC meetings all 4 Action Strategies
	1. Primary function of SRCC is a regulatory role to enforce zoning standards and work together with towns to harmonize requirements within shoreland zone
	2. WQ monitoring has been conducted for 18 years and has allowed for the identification of impaired waters in Thatcher Brook watershed
	3. Conservation and stewardship are emphasized for resource protection
	4. BMPs are included in the development projects that are reviewed regularly by SRCC

**MJ Dillingham/Maine Water Company**

MWC uses the mouth of the Saco River as a drinking water source and has a vested interest in the health of the watershed. MWC maintains a program to encourage employees to participate in watershed organizations, like the Saco Recreational Councils clean up by canoe on 9/8/18. Each canoe collected roughly 4 bags of trash and engaged Boy Scout troops from around New England.

**Bonnie Pothier/Sen Angus King’s office**

Saco Watershed is a huge asset to Southern Maine population, so Sen King’s office attends to know what challenges we face and what his office can do to assist and understand how federal agencies can help.

**Rich Brereton/FB Environmental**

FBE has worked in the Watershed, specifically with the Upper Saco River Valley Land Trust (USRVLT) using a grant to identify potential contamination sources in 8 NH towns. A review of ordinances and development of a master plan were completed to support groundwater protection, using NHDES model. FBE is also working on a 10-yr project with Kezar Lake Watershed Association (KLWA.org) to monitor WQ and 4-yr climate change observatory report using hydrology and water cycle information.

**Anna Biddle/NRCS-Oxford County**

Anna is representing all 3 Maine counties in the Watershed today (Oxford, Cumberland and York). NRCS works everyday to fulfill the first 3 Action Strategies through management plans. Oxford County has 7 new contracts for ag waste management.

**Jessie Meeks/DHHS CDC Drinking Water Program**
Maine Drinking Water Program offers low-interest land acquisition loans to purchase/conserve land. MDWP also provides education and outreach (Sophie Scott does this), supports the Childrens Water Festival each year, and coordinates with MWUA, MWRA and other groups to achieve the mission of source protection throughout Maine.

**Chris Feurt/UNE+WNERR**

Chris thanked “the amazing group of people in the room” and specifically recognized the SRCC Commissioners for coming and hosting. She also mentioned that SRCC is a unique organization (none other worldwide) and is used in her classwork. Chris also reminded us about:

* USFS tour with Jim Innes
* EPA Technical Assistance Project will help continue with GIS data mapping over the coming year to address emergency response issues
* Annual meeting at UNE is 11/30/18
* Maine Water Conference on 3/28/19 will feature a Saco Watershed track
* Joint Chiefs Grant Opportunity should be considered in 2019

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| **ATTENDEE** | **ORGANIZATION** |
| Allison Foran | Lovewell Pond Association |
| Andy Tolman | Formerly of Maine Drinking Water Program |
| Anna Biddle | Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – ME |
| Andy Colter | USFS (US Forest Service) |
| Bonnie Pothier | Sen. Angus King’s Office |
| Chris Feurt | UNE/WNERR |
| Dalyn Houser | Saco River Corridor Commission (SRCC) |
| David Robinson | SRCC |
| Drew Dumsch | The Ecology School |
| Emily Greene | UNE/WNERR |
| Galen Cunning | Resident of Buxton |
| Jessie Meeks | Maine Drinking Water Program |
| Jim Innes | USFS/ White Mtn National Forest |
| Judy Ingraham | SRCC |
| Karl Honkonen | USFS |
| Kelly Boland | Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – NH |
| Kira Jacobs (calling in) | USEPA Drinking Water Program  |
| Mark Dubois | Poland Springs |
| Mary Jane (MJ) Dillingham | Maine Water Company |
| Missy Brandt | York County SWCD |
| Rich Brereton | FB Environmental |
| Robyn Saunders | Former Cumberland County SWCD |
| Shawn Tarpey | SRCC |
| Tyler Davidson (calling in) | NHDES Drinking Water Program |
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